



St. Comgall's Primary School
23 Brunswick Road
Bangor
Co. Down
BT20 3DS

St Comgall's PS, Bangor *"Quality Learning, Friendship For All"*

Digitally: Remote &/or Blended Home Learning Policy

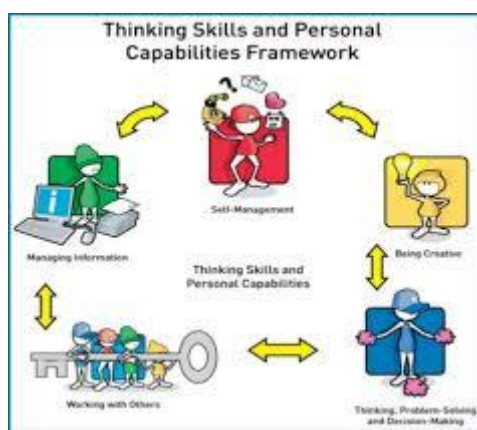
Rationale:

Since the beginning of the current and ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, in order to safeguard and preserve the health and safety of our communities, it has been necessary to reimagine the way in which we live and work. This has had a profound effect on our daily 'norms' and how we live our lives.

In March 2020, in efforts to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, the NI Executive deemed it necessary to close schools to physical in-class teaching and instead adopted a policy of 'Remote Learning' which asked schools to switch to an 'online' approach to teaching and learning.

Whilst there can be no true substitute for high quality in-class teaching and we fully embrace that the heart of high quality learning is the centrality of positive relationships, as a digitally forward-thinking school, we were advantaged in that online learning was already a strong feature of St Comgall's Home-School partnership practice and teaching/learning strategy with 100% of school families already connected to and invested in our Seesaw Digital Learning Portfolio.

The provision of Seesaw For Schools (paid app) has been a staple of St Comgall's Digital Strategy since 2015. The school's Digital Vision clearly outlined technology as a tool and vehicle through which to deliver, communicate, track and monitor personalised, tailored and high quality teaching and learning whilst promoting the desired Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities which we dubbed the 5Cs - **C**reativity, **C**ollaboration, **C**ommunication, **C**hallenge and **C**ritical Thinking.



An ambassador school for Seesaw, in 2015 we were originally one of only two trial schools in Northern Ireland and since then, five years down the line, our deployment, understanding and use



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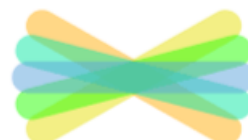
of the app has gone from strength to strength and is now a fully operational two-way partnership with families (paid for by school) to best support pupil progress.

Many of our staff have been or are Seesaw Ambassadors providing guidance and regular support to other educators and schools and sharing/demonstrating our practice to interested groups across the region.



SEESAW
AMBASSADOR

Seesaw



What is it?

A digital portfolio that captures learning, spurs reflection, and promotes engagement.

Student driven

ELs can capture learning through recordings or photos.



Share learning

Celebrate students' work with parents and families.



Assess learning

Easily assess students' skill development and understanding of content.



Teacher friendly

Designed to be a streamline, user-friendly teaching tool.

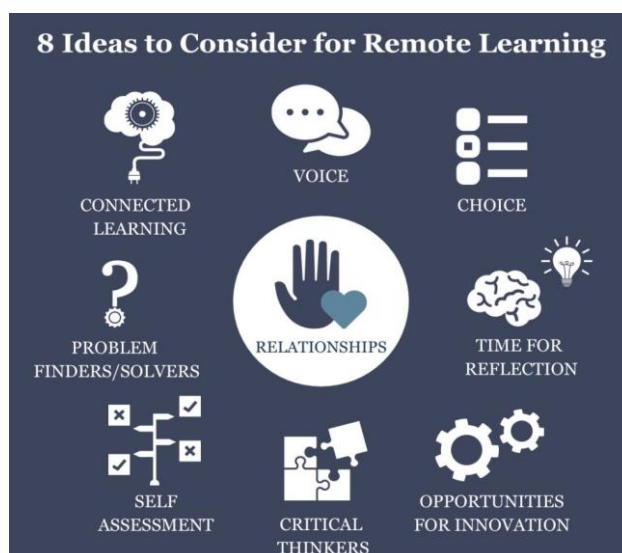


Reflect on learning

Teachers, families, & students can reflect on the progress of learning over time.



It is timely now to outline St Comgall's approach to current and future Digitally Remote Home Learning approaches in the midst of this ongoing global pandemic.



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Definitions: According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED);

Remote Learning: occurs where the student and educator are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment. Information is most often relayed through technology.

Blended Learning: A style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching.

Hybrid Learning: Synchronous learning that teaches both in-person and online learners simultaneously combining classroom experiences, experiential learning objectives and digital delivery to best suit the circumstances of learners.

Whilst some of the above approaches are already a feature of our normal daily practice and are not exclusively required as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, as this health crisis continues, it will be necessary to have in place a range of flexible, contingent teaching and learning strategies which can be adapted and applied quickly and seamlessly to fast-changing situations in order to meet the needs of the St Comgall's school community.

It may be that whole school or partial closures could require that a mix of Remote, Blended and indeed Hybrid Learning approaches could be ongoing across the school at any one time.

We anticipate that it may be likely that various 'bubbles' or indeed family groups/individual children and/or staff may need to self-isolate at some point and we recognise that whilst in-class teaching may be continuing in school, it is also necessary to accommodate those pupils who cannot be physically present. In this circumstance, 'teaching' is not possible but staff will continue to provide a structured format of learning and will regularly check-in with pupils and include them/celebrate in-class activities with them via Seesaw as much as is possible.

With that in mind, **this policy aims to:**

- ❖ Define St Comgall's approaches to Digital Teaching & Learning which take account of a range of circumstances for the school community.
- ❖ Define Pastoral Care approaches in a Remote Learning Situation.
- ❖ Define the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community in such circumstances.

Pedagogy & Practice:

Central to all of our policies and indeed our Catholic Ethos are mutual, respectful, positive relationships and the common goal to do the very best for each child with a love and care modelled on our faith and the example of Jesus.

This belief is just as important, if not more important, in times when we are separated from each other physically.

Pastoral care, warmth and support are wholly evident in the structure of our Digitally Remote Teaching and learning. Whilst the 'look' and content of Digitally Remote Teaching & Learning will vary from Key Stage to Key Stage and perhaps even year group to year group, the approach is consistent throughout the school.



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Having researched various Digitally Remote/Blended Learning models and analysed the pros and cons to each, St Comgall's PS has opted for an **Asynchronous Approach**.

Asynchronous Teaching & Learning:

There are many reasons for adopting an asynchronous approach, perhaps the most important of which is the need to reduce/mitigate any unnecessary widening of the attainment/poverty gap by providing equitable access to learning for all family situations.

Not all children can access devices at the same time or 'live' considering we are a family school where there are often multiple siblings in families. With a range of scenarios including parents working from home using devices or indeed out at work during the day and unable to supervise learning activities, 'live' lessons (which require adult supervision, individual devices and whole school co-ordination/timetabling) simply would not work for most families.

Aware of the digital poverty divide which exists for many of our Free School Meals, SEN and single-parent/alternative families, St Comgall's have sought to provide technology (where possible) to families to assist but this too has limitations and is dependent on home WiFi connectivity, which some families simply do not have.

In some cases, we are aware that children are often working from parents/others' smartphones using 3G or 4G WiFi. The size of these mobile telephone screens makes live teaching using split-screen almost impossible for a child to follow. On the assumption too that children, for a variety of reasons may miss out or cannot login at the time of a 'live' lesson, they will have then missed out on their teaching input for the day.

By providing asynchronous teaching, which allows flexibility for families and the personalised tutelage of pupils with sensitively tailored material and lessons that they can rewatch many times, we seek to narrow the inequality gap and provide high quality teaching and learning activities which suit individual pupil needs and can fit each family's individual circumstances.

Zoom is not an approved Safeguarding teaching tool and though we acknowledge that there are alternatives such as Google Meets or Microsoft Teams, they too work on the assumption that all children can access the 'live' lesson at the same time and are familiar with the platforms, having an adult on standby to supervise, when we know most often this is not the case.

Age-appropriateness, levels of attention and concentration and wide-ranging need within classes are also key considerations which mean that 'live' teaching is not suitable for most primary-aged children.

Live Lessons inhibit the teacher from engaging with the class. Once a teacher moves to share their screen in order to make use/demonstrate teaching materials, they lose the ability to see the class any more. Whilst it is nice for children to see each other on screen in gallery mode, much time is often wasted getting children set-up, muted, video on, mute off etc.

Lessons are also limited by the fact that in order to 'teach' the whole class live, the material must be pitched to the average band so that everyone can attempt to follow along.



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This 'whole-class teaching' excludes the lower ability and higher ability children from getting the additional push/challenge/support they require and removes the ability for any subtle interventions and differentiation. As the lesson is 'live' and 'in the moment', those children who require repeated instruction or follow-up also lose the ability to rewatch and revise the teaching input.

For this and all of the reasons outlined above, asynchronous teaching with video tutorials hosted on Seesaw as our tried and tested, safeguarded, user-friendly platform (already familiar to our parents and pupils) is our preferred Digitally Remote Teaching & Learning strategy.

It's important to note that this policy does not apply in the case of short-term absence due to illness, holiday or other occasion. Children who are absent from school due to ill-health are deemed to be unfit for school and therefore not in need of home learning. As is normal practice, they will be supported upon their return to school to address areas of learning missed. In cases of long-term sickness, the school will work in partnership with families, EWO and EOTAS to ascertain need and design a learning programme as advised to each individual circumstance.

Remote Learning applies to those cases where pupils are in good health and have been asked to self-isolate either as a result of a confirmed covid case/contact at school or required via familial/community contact.

Asynchronous Learning Activities

CottinTuckerTeachable.com



Read + Take Notes



Watch Video-based Instruction



Listen to Podcasts



Explore Teacher-curated Resources



Engage in Online Discussions



Practice + Review



Research + Explore



Reflect + Document Learning

Engaging with Stakeholders:

Having sought parental feedback on our Digitally Remote Strategy during lockdown (March-June 2020), the SLT carefully analysed the results and comments provided by families in our survey completed in June 2020.

As a result of feedback analysis, we made some tweaks to our approaches to further support all families and all circumstances.



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St Comgall's Digitally Remote Teaching & Home Learning Strategy: (🏠 Home)

- Teaching input and learning activity is designed and planned to mirror as closely as possible to the school day experience.
- Lesson resources and pre-learning materials are posted to parents on Seesaw the day/evening before they are to be explored - in response to parental feedback - meaning that families can organise and prepare their child's learning, gather any resources needed and have time to become familiar with content areas in order to best plan their day around their individual child(ren), childcare and/or working arrangements in advance.
- All Teaching & Learning is grounded in the **P.A.R. Model** - Teacher **PRESENCE**, **P**resentation/Modelling, Learning **ACTIVITY** & **A**PPPLICATION of skills, **REVIEW** & **R**EFLECTION of learning and wellbeing.
- Teachers outline the structure of learning/advising on a suggested timetable for pupils. This is individual to each teacher/class/group and a matter for family choice.
- Teachers will monitor engagement/'attendance' of pupils in online learning and will reach out via the inbox to families where children are not actively present or regularly engaged.
- Asynchronous teaching via Seesaw means that families can access learning at a pace/time of their choosing but must do so on a regular basis.
- Persistent lack of engagement/'attendance' will be notified to the Vice-Principal and Principal for follow-up monitoring telephone calls.
- Children/Parents can watch, rewatch and avail of learning endlessly via Seesaw meaning that no-one falls behind through 'missed lessons'.
- Teachers (according to the age/stage of their pupils and as appropriate to the curriculum content to be covered) may provide a range of material/activities for pupils home learning which could include e.g. step-by-step video tutorials, worked examples, differentiated tasks and support, activity books (matched to hard copy materials), reading to children, guided virtual field trips, suggested wellbeing and physical movement breaks and/or pastoral, fun challenges aiming to replicate as closely as possible our regular school timetable and the wider NI Curriculum.
- Where apt, individual, targeted and/or extension activities/tutorials/video/audio messages may be provided for children requiring tailored differentiation - be that SEN, Pastoral, Gifted & Talented, Autism or Dyslexic specific needs - with input from 1:1 CAs as appropriate.
- Recent parental feedback (June 2020) suggested that teachers (particularly at KS2) should minimise the provision/requirement for pupils to engage in 'optional' aspects to remote learning (most often WAU, The Arts, Physical activities) in favour of more concentrated focus on Literacy & Numeracy. St Comgall's staff have taken this on board and, given that a return to a prolonged lockdown is not likely, for short periods of isolation, will respect parental wishes. Should longer isolation periods be enforced, this provision will be kept under review in order to best meet the needs of the whole child.
- Teachers (in good health and working from home) remain available and **P**resent to children/parents throughout the school day (9-3.30pm), engaging with children via the inbox/audio comment functions, marking work uploaded (**A**ctivity/**A**pplication), providing verbal, modelled and written feedback and suggesting next steps (**R**evue/**R**eflection).



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- It's important to note that teachers are entitled to take breaks and lunch and should not feel the need to be working constantly. There is also no expectation on a teacher who is ill to provide any teaching input - in this instance 'sub' cover arrangements/year group input (*if possible) or hard copy activity booklets will apply.
- Teachers supporting classes in school are not available online to support individual children at home (likely to be off for a minimum of 1 week) during school hours but will maintain contact with families as and when possible in addition to families accessing support via the school office and Principal.
- In ordinary times, Seesaw messaging via pupil portfolios or inbox is not an appropriate forum to raise concerns or ask operational questions about school with teachers - normal procedure of contacting staff via the School Office still applies -
Tel 02891 463194 or email ajones169@c2kni.net
- Pupils (and parents for younger children) are encouraged to upload their work/answers/projects and reviews to Inbox, Padlet, Seesaw Activities, Kahoot Quizzes, Google Forms & Google Classroom as appropriate. This allows us to promote and take account of Pupil and Parent Voice whilst maintaining a sense of community, collaboration and celebration.
- Pupils can 'see' and 'engage' with each other via class Padlet walls, audio comments, Seesaw Blogs and pastorally via school-wide announcements/videos/podcast etc.

Seesaw Class vs Family App



use this app for your child's home learning



Photo



Drawing



Video



use this app for parent communication and see your child's portfolio



Note



Link



Home Work Learning:

From P1-7 St Comgall's children are taught and become familiar with Seesaw Activities and the creative tools Seesaw provides.

Children can log in to the Seesaw Class app using their Home Learning Code which enables them to share work and respond to the Seesaw Activities teachers may assign for homework.

These activities will be identified within the Seesaw **Class** app, under the **Activities** tab and the title

of the activity will start with **Home**. These Homework Activities are distinct from those that will be used in class.

This proactive approach helps our children and families feel already prepared for and familiar with the setup for any necessary digitally remote learning scenario where Seesaw Activities and posts may be assigned.



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E-Safety:

During any period of digitally remote home learning, children will naturally spend more time online and it is our collective responsibility as Governors, Staff and Parents to safeguard and mitigate any potential risk to pupils.

Internet safety advice and guidance is regularly provided to St Comgall's families via our Parent Carer Pack in addition to **Parent Zone** and **National Online Safety** posters shared regularly on Seesaw and the provision of PSNI, Sentinus, Allstate and other parent/pupil workshops offered ordinarily within a school year.

The **DENI Safer Schools App** has been developed to equip everyone with the knowledge and information necessary to protect children online. Information on how to access/download this is provided to parents annually in hard copy however instructions can also be downloaded here:

<https://inege.com/safer-schools-ni/>

Whilst we can not guarantee 100% safety in a home environment, we have been proactive in advising parents on appropriate online safeguards, how to adjust their broadband/wifi settings for maximum parental control and we have carefully chosen Seesaw as a recognised and secure platform for pupil learning.

Family Life, Mental & Physical Health and Screen Time:

We recognise the added pressure families are under during periods of lockdown and self-isolation. We appreciate that the context of each family is different and there will be many variables. We also know that some families will have key worker members, or parents working from home, perhaps may have suffered bereavement or job loss or will be experiencing financially difficult or other strained home circumstances.

Each family will need to make informed *personal decisions* and decide upon a routine for Home Learning which best suits their individual circumstances. However, it is vital that all families **remain in regular close contact with school staff via seesaw presence** and in particular reach out to the school principal in confidence if they need any help or support.

Parents should try to facilitate children to **try to access Home Learning daily** or as regularly as possible as a means of registering 'attendance' at school, the same expectation as exists within ordinary times. Persistent lack of engagement or attendance will be followed up by school staff.

During extended periods of isolation or lockdown, it is essential that pupils and families find time for physical activity and take regular breaks away from technology in order to reduce feelings of isolation and any detrimental effect to mental health.

Staff may choose to include suggestions for mindfulness, brain or movement breaks as well as therapeutic arts, crafts or other physical activities into their remote teaching plans however, it is crucial that all families monitor screen time exposure and try to build into their family routines, some time for other offline activity which does not involve technology.

We suggest that, when not self-isolating, families take regular extended walks, enjoy time out of the house in nature or in gardens and all families take some time to engage in family cooking time or meals and conversation, play board games, try some arts & crafts activity, do some good deeds for others, listen to music, read, take long baths, maintain a gratitude journal, rest or find other ways to recharge and take care of themselves.



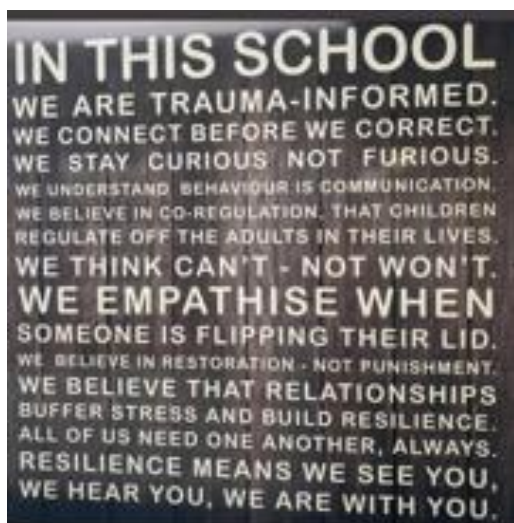
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Pastoral Care:

As part of our ongoing commitment to provision of Pastoral Care & Pupil Wellbeing, in addition to input and activities provided by class teachers and CAs via Seesaw and Inbox the following interventions are available and in use as part of our Remote Learning Strategy:

- Loan/Gifting/Sponsorship of Technology & WiFi where possible/apt/required
- Distribution of food parcels arranged/delivered as needed to families on Free School Meals Register or as apt EA electronic payments directly to FSM family bank accounts
- Regular telephone check-ins/house visits from SLT for 'hard-to-reach' or disengaged families/children
- Regular telephone check-ins/house visits from SLT for FSM Families
- Regular telephone check-ins from SLT for SEN Stage 5 Statemented Pupils
- Regular telephone check-ins/visits from SLT for vulnerable/at-risk/pastoral or social care cases
- Provision of tailored activities specific to a child's needs as required
- Regular check-ins from SEN 1:1 CAs to their SEN children with tailored learning activities and praise/feedback *as apt/possible
- Weekly whole-school messaging and communications from Principal/SLT
- Seesaw Videos, notices or /Blog/Podcast Celebrations of achievements and success
- Access to Principal via email including out of hours - please note there may be a delay in return/response
- Signposting to apt Agencies for further support
- Remote access to **FamilyWorks Counsellor - Sharman Gilliland** - as apt/required



MY CHECK LIST FOR EVERY CLASS THIS YEAR

1. Keep them safe
2. Lower their anxiety about the current situation
3. Make them laugh
4. Make them feel loved
5. Teach them something

All in that order



Staff Working Arrangements & Work/Life Balance

(Ref: EA Responsive Working During Covid-19 - A Manager's Toolkit - August 2020)

Our Staff are our greatest resource - we need to cherish them!

Staff health & wellbeing is as paramount as that of pupils. Pressure on staff during Remote Home Learning is immeasurably stressful and challenging.

Staff not only have to deal with separation from co-teaching colleagues but have the added pressures of challenging technology and home WiFi issues, collaborative remote planning with



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colleagues, managing parent and pupil expectations, needs and requests for support in addition to staff members' own family/home/caring circumstances and responsibilities.

Staff are encouraged to keep in regular touch with colleagues throughout the day, particularly year group partners and Heads of Key Stage. Year Group Partners & Heads of Key Stage can access and share resources and offer support in each others' Seesaw classes.

All staff are already members of a Teaching & Non-Teaching WhatsApp Group and the Principal leads and encourages regular pastoral check-ins and updates with colleagues.

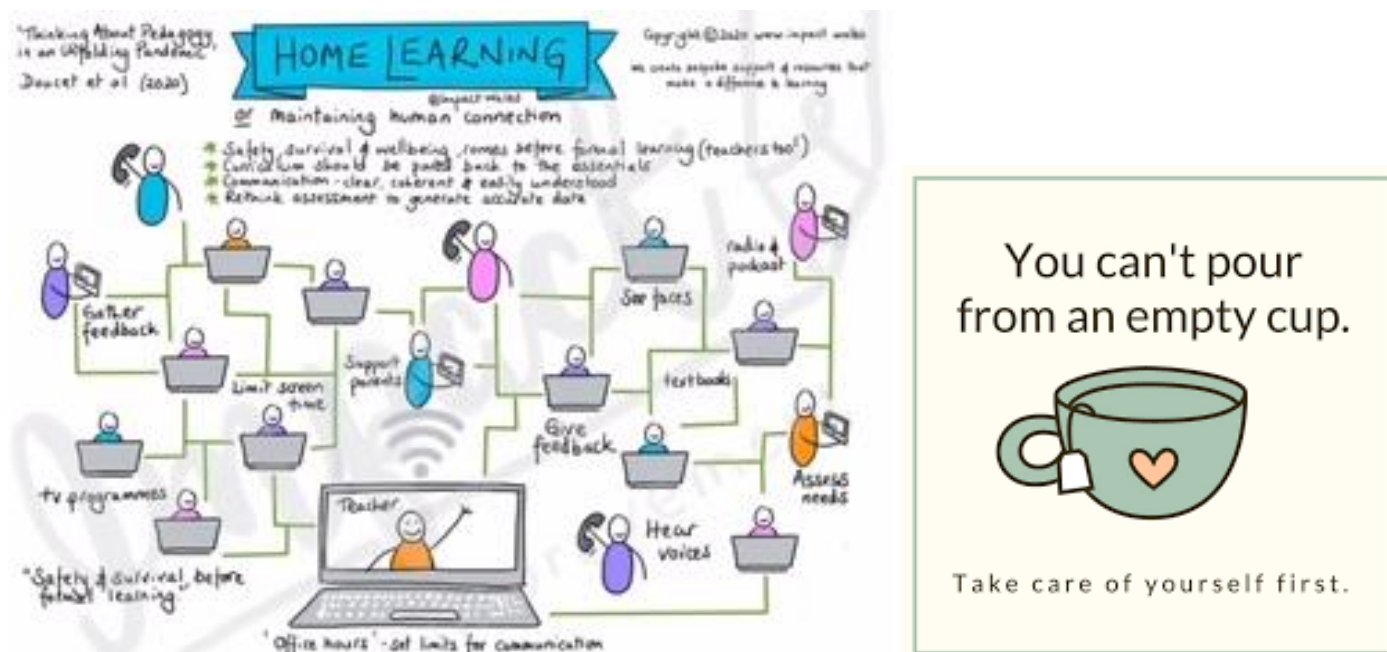
Regular communication is particularly important for staff who are self-isolating when the rest of the staff are at school.

Staff are encouraged to take regular breaks, reach out to others, go for walks and leave their computer for periods of time. Staff should plan carefully their home 'working' environment, making sure to take account of EA Guidance re seating/posture and lighting.

There is **no expectation** on any member of staff who becomes unwell to continue teaching.

Staff will need to find a routine that suits their home circumstances but, as far as is possible, should not work more than or past their normal working hours.




Any staff member struggling (for any reason) should contact the Principal or member of SLT immediately for support. Staff are also reminded that they can access Inspire services at any time.



Ref: Impact Wales – Home Learning Considerations (2020)

Home/School Seesaw Agreement

Seesaw is a platform that is used globally for schools to share learning experiences and communicate regularly with families.

| | School Staff | Pupils | Parents |
|---|---|---|--|
| In School  | <p>Staff use Seesaw to document and track pupils' learning, assign pupils' digital work and develop core UICT skills.</p> <p>We also use Seesaw as a pastoral community forum to celebrate pupil and school achievements and success and to build a positive online school community.</p> | <p>Pupils will respond to Seesaw Activities and post content to their Seesaw journal as directed by the class teacher and/or Learning Support Assistant.</p> <p>All pupil uploads must be approved by staff.</p> <p>Pupils should not change any settings on their Seesaw account.</p> | <p>Using the Seesaw Family App, parents should regularly check in to Seesaw, liking and commenting positively on their child's learning.</p> <p>Parents are encouraged to join in with School Life celebrations and News by liking and commenting positively, building a sense of online school community.</p> |
| Homework  | <p>Staff assign homework activities to consolidate and reinforce class learning.</p> <p>Homeworks can be presented in different ways.</p> <p>Staff may choose to assign some offline homework digitally on Seesaw e.g. Spellings/Reading, HFW/Number practice and provide support videos or hard copy materials to pupils and/or parents.</p> <p>Staff may also choose to assign digital homework using Seesaw activities or other teacher-made digital work/resources using e.g. Book Creator, Slides, Google Forms, Keynote etc</p> | <p>Pupils will use the CLASS app to respond to Seesaw Homework Activities that have  Home indicated in the title.</p> <p>Pupils may post photos, videos or drawings of their homework as directed by their teacher.</p> <p>If pupils have any questions about their digital homework, they can ask their teacher for support once they are in class at school again.</p> <p>Pupils should show their home work to an adult before submitting to their teacher via Seesaw.</p> <p>Pupils should only tag their own names on the post/Activity they are submitting.</p> <p>Pupils should not change any settings on their Seesaw account.</p> | <p>Parents will continue to support the completion of all homework assigned.</p> <p>Homeworks can be presented in different ways.</p> <p>This might be digital homeworks that are to be completed on the CLASS app, offline tasks communicated digitally via the FAMILY app or hard copy assigned materials.</p> <p>Homework is an integral part of the home-school learning partnership and is essential to continuing pupil progress.</p> <p>All homeworks assigned are compulsory as referenced in our Homework Policy.</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Remote Home Learning</p> <p><i>(Through Lockdown or Covid-19 enforced self-isolation of 5 days+ and whilst remaining in good health)</i></p>  <p>CLASS</p> <p>Pupils use the CLASS App to complete activities</p>  <p>FAMILY</p> <p>Parents use the FAMILY App to contact staff</p> | <p>Teachers will provide asynchronous Teaching & Learning activity & support via the Seesaw CLASS app.</p> <p>Teachers will open the Inbox facility on the FAMILY App for parents to make contact as necessary.</p> <p>Learning materials and support will be tailored for children as apt.</p> <p>Staff will respond and provide feedback to pupils, structuring and guiding learning throughout this time.</p> <p>Staff are available to support pupils remotely (<i>*excluding breaks and lunch</i>) between 9am and 3.30pm and will endeavour to respond in a timely manner.</p> <p>As is good e-safety and safeguarding practice, teachers will not facilitate private messaging with pupils.</p> | <p>Pupils will use the CLASS app to respond to Seesaw Activities that have  Home indicated in the title.</p> <p>Pupils should show their home learning to an adult before submitting to their teacher via Seesaw. Pupils should not change any settings on their Seesaw account. If pupils wish to share news or updates with their peers, they can do so by requesting to share their item to the class Seesaw Blog by tapping the globe icon under their post. The Blog will be used as a 'community forum' where pupils can engage with their classmates by commenting on posts using the THINK acronym:</p>  | <p>During periods of Remote Home Learning, parents may need to contact teachers with a learning-based query or to seek advice.</p> <p>In this instance, parents should use the Inbox facility on the Seesaw FAMILY app to leave a message for staff who will get back to you as soon as they can within working hours 9-3.30pm only.</p> <p>For general queries, matters of health or other confidential issues, the School Secretary and Principal are available by telephone (redirected) 02891 463194 or via email.</p>  <p>Secretary: ajones169@c2kni.net</p> <p>Principal: chunter073@c2kni.net</p> |
| <p>Communication</p>  <p>FAMILY</p> | <p>St Comgall's Staff aim to support parental partnership by providing timely information, updates and guidance to families.</p> <p>We always aim to post such information within working hours but apologise in advance if, due to the busyness of a school day and own Home/Family commitments, posts may sometimes appear outside of</p> | <p>As is good e-safety and safeguarding practice, teachers will not facilitate private messaging with pupils.</p> <p>If pupils have any questions about their digital home learning work, they can firstly ask a family member for help and if further guidance is still necessary, the family member can then inbox message the teacher for more support via the FAMILY App.</p> | <p>Families are encouraged to like and comment positively on school life/events and information.</p> <p>As is normal Complaints or Concerns policy, Seesaw is not to be used for parents to post negative comments, raise pupil issues or complaints. We'd much rather chat to you to in person*/via telephone to resolve matters quickly.</p> <p>If you need to reply to an</p> |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | working hours. The Principal will post a weekly News/Diary update each Sunday for the week ahead. | | Information Post, please use the inbox facility so that your post is not publicly viewed. A member of staff will get back to you. |
|--|--|--|--|

This policy was originally constructed in **March 2020** during Lockdown by C Hunter.

Reviewed in **June 2020** following Parental Feedback and SLT Analysis/Input – C Hunter.

Revisited and reviewed – **October 2020** in light of DE Restart Guidance issued 1st October 2020 – with further input from SLT, UICT Co-ordinator, Pastoral Care DT & Principal.

Ratified by Governors: **3rd November 2020.**

This policy remains subject to ongoing review in light of changing circumstances and is intended to be a responsive working document.

C Hunter

C Hunter
Principal

A Higgins
Pastoral Care DT

N O'Connor
UICT Co-ordinator



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